

PM: Government provides equal chances for all

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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi presenting a bicycle and certificate of excellence to S. Theventhiran, who was one of the high achievers in the recent UPSR examination from Kepala Batas. On the left is the PM's wife Datin Paduka Seri Jeanne Abdullah.

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KEPALA BATAS: All races in the country can rest assured the government will provide equal opportunities in education, the prime minister said.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said his administration would be fair to all races.

He said the government understood that it was only through education that citizens could contribute to the country's well-being.

"It is also through education that all races will enjoy quality of life. Education will ensure that people make a decent living and get good jobs," he said, adding that the government had always given extra attention to ensure the poor obtained a decent education to help them climb out of poverty.

He noted that rural students were getting better results and attributed this to government efforts to provide better facilities in schools.

Abdullah, who is Kepala Batas member of parliament, said this when presenting awards to high achievers in the Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah examination in the constituency.

Later, he met a group of 150 members of the Indian community and spoke at length on the need for everyone to maintain peaceful and harmonious relations between the races.

Abdullah said the government had not

failed any community in the country and would continue to respond to and fulfil the people's wishes.

He, however, admitted that what the government has done might not be enough.

"Different communities have different needs. It is impossible for the government to fulfil everyone's needs 100 per cent.

"However, I can assure you that we will continue to do more in the future," he said.

Abdullah said co-operation from each and every community was vital for the government to carry out its responsibilities to the people.

"We can only do it if our country is peaceful and harmonious.

"As such, we need the people — Malays, Chinese and Indians — to work hand-in-hand to ensure public safety and improve the situation in the country."

Abdullah said although there were bound to be problems, these could be overcome if everyone remained united.

Abdullah said that as the prime minister, his responsibility was to all Malaysians regardless of race and not only to the Malay community.

He also said he would continue to act against disruptions of the country's peace and stability.

Abdullah said there had never been a clash between the Malays and Indians which was caused by religion. "I will continue to respect all races, I will not treat the Indians as my enemy."